



# We must learn from Argentine mistakes and impose discipline for whole season

**W**e have now discussed the imposition of stricter discipline on the players by the umpires in the Argentine, having reserved our judgement until the end of their season. By all accounts the new regime started well but as the season wore on the behaviour of the players became progressively worse until, by the time of the Open at Palermo, things were almost back to square one.

I am reminded of the prayer of Sir Francis Drake which reads: "There must be a beginning and an end of any greater matter, but the continuing unto the end until it is thoroughly finished yields the true glory."

Thus, as all things are relative we must continue to impose the new levels of discipline until the end of our season.

## Respect is key

As the football season draws to a close, and this will be the last mention of the sport – if you can call it that – until next season, my eye was caught by a comment by a senior manager.

"Why wasn't I asked about the referee?" Because, he continues: "That was probably the best refereeing performance by any official since I returned to the game. There was no hassle and



Umpires must take heed of Sir Francis Drake's advice and "continue unto the end"

no aggressiveness against him, he talks to the players, he has a smile on his face and is respected."

Take from that what you will, but the key is at the end summed up in the word "respect".

## Test updates

For the last few years it has been a condition that those with an S handicap have to pass the Rules Test and be confirmed by

## We must impose strict discipline until the end of the season

their club as being sufficiently experienced to advance to minus-two. Only then can they play matches at other clubs. This ruling has now been extended to

the Pony Club, which is excellent. It has happily led to many more taking the test which now may be conducted by the club under supervision with the papers, for the most part, being corrected by a regional chief umpire.

The umpires are still encouraged to visit clubs in their region from time to time to see how things are going and offer any required advice.

We have made it a rule that those handicapped S or minus-two may not take the umpire test except with a strong recommendation from their club as they, by definition, should not be called on to umpire a match until gaining in age and experience. The tests this year have been configured on a multiple choice system to aid those whose command of

the English language is not up to scratch – sadly this does not only include those for whom English is a second language.

## Mixed progress

It has taken time, but the Professional Umpire Group is now a cohesive whole with a growing international representation – so much so that when it's members are called on their mobile the first question is "where are you?".

The second or A Group is not such a happy story.

The idea is to have a similar cohesive and organised group of those able to umpire important matches at the behest of clubs up and down the country.

There are all sorts of reasons and restraints why this has not worked (such as playing or club umpiring commitments and lack of centralised control *et cetera*). As a first and most important step we have appointed Roddy Matthews (mobile 07798 821309) to run the group and secondly we have attempted to reduce numbers so those on the list make a positive commitment.

Some of the same restraints will still apply but we see this as an important step forward and hope that clubs will benefit. ✕

► Read more from Arthur at [www.polotimes.co.uk](http://www.polotimes.co.uk)



## Play goes on until the whistle blows...

### This month's puzzle

*You are the umpire; jot down the incidents which may occur in a match which would cause you to stop play immediately.*

### Last month's solution

*Name the circumstances in which a team can play with three players. The most obvious occasion is when a player is sent off for a chukka or a whole match under Rules 10a or 10b. However a team may also start a match with three players if one of their players is late or seriously indisposed and a substitute is not readily available. But beware as the team handicap must still fall within the handicap limits of the tournament. Thus if a minus-one or minus-two is late that team cannot play, much as it would probably like to.*